

SOME DRAWINGS OF



ANCIENT EMBROIDERY



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FRONTISPIECE
from
CIRENCESTER.



SOME · DRAWINGS
OF
ANCIENT · EMBROIDERY

THIRTY SPECIMENS

BY

MRS. MARY BARBER

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MANCHESTER,
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NOTICE.

THIS book, written at my suggestion by Mrs. BARBER, was nearly ready for publication at the time of her decease. At her request, made to me in writing, when she felt that in all probability she would not live to complete it, I undertook to superintend its publication. Her knowledge on the subject of Church Needlework was so entirely gained from the careful examination of old specimens, which are inaccessible to the majority of workers, that she hoped that she might be doing good service by making some few of them known.

I entirely agreed with her in the desirableness of such a step, and I cannot doubt that the time and trouble which, with so keen an interest, she bestowed on the subject, will be of general use.

W. BUTTERFIELD.

ADAM STREET, ADELPHI,

March 1880.

INTRODUCTION.

IN connexion with the work of Church Restoration, which has been carried on for the last half century, and which is still in progress, there has arisen the revival of many decorative arts, and amongst them that of Church Embroidery.

I have felt that a few drawings, chiefly from English ecclesiastical needlework, may be useful to those who have not the opportunity of visiting the old scattered specimens which remain to us from ancient days. It is obviously most important that these, and such as these, should be well studied by those who desire to undertake church embroidery. One of the earliest existing specimens is a Stole, known as S. Cuthbert's, now in Durham Cathedral, though undoubtedly of a later date than his time. The figures and faces upon it are finished in very fine work, and in a better manner than was generally the case at a later period. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the work, while not so minute, has however the advantage of being more effective. Floss silk is often combined with gold passing, and sometimes with silver passing, for the sake of giving a high light to some delicate drapery, or brightening the edges.

Embroidery is generally worked upon linen stretched in a frame. Before being finally cut out of the frame it is pasted or glued at the back. Paper is sometimes glued on. This is to prevent the edges of the linen from fraying, as it has to be cut out rather close to the needlework. When mounted on the material of which the hanging or vestment is made, it must be neatly sewn down and edged with different colours.

Dark green has usually a white edge, light green has a yellow cord, gold has blue on one side and yellow cord on the other. These colours are varied, according to the colour of the grounds upon which the embroidery is mounted. It is often difficult to decide the exact tone of colours in old work. Time and careless treatment have faded and otherwise injured them.

INTRODUCTION.

The scroll and spray work, which is one of the great characteristics of ancient embroidery, is contrived by a cord of brownish yellow floss, and one thread of gold, twisted by the hand in working, and a thin line of yellow dacca, in embroidery stitch, close to the inside of the curves, but not quite touching the cord. This line is invariably put inside the scroll, crossing the cord when the curve takes an opposite direction. Yellow silk cords of two shades were sometimes used; but if a thread of gold and silk was used, it was made by the hand in working.

These well-curved scrolls, with sprays and spangles, tie together the various parts of the design, fill up the spaces, and add much to the delicacy, richness, and beauty of the whole. It is perhaps in this last point that, in practice, modern embroidery chiefly fails. It is a rare thing to find this part of any modern design made with vigour and freedom, and a full sense of its importance.

It may surprise some persons that the ornaments in use in old needlework were, comparatively speaking, few, and often repeated. Angels of various kinds, fleurs-de-lis, conventional flowers, a double-headed eagle, stars, &c., singularly alike, were in use, as powderings, generally in the specimens which remain to us. There was no effort after something new, but, to a large extent, a perfect contentment with a repetition which hardly suits our modern views. The arrangement and treatment, however, of these ornaments were so free and various, that instead of wearying the eye, they wear a continually fresh look.

Is there not very often too much *effort* in modern designs for embroidery, as in other things, to do something new; too much restless striving after what is called 'originality,' which, as Mr. Ruskin well puts it, consists after all not in *newness*, but in *freshness*?

I hope that this publication of a few specimens may be of use in making persons appreciate the traditional treatment of such things, and may induce them to go and see old work for themselves. My object is to give some of the less accessible specimens. There is a store of fine work at the South Kensington Museum, which everybody should examine carefully. It will be a great loss to us if we do not constantly renew our acquaintance with what remains.

MARY BARBER.

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PLATE No. 1.

THIS work, belonging to a chasuble of red embossed velvet, is in the possession of P. H. Howard, Esq., of Corby Castle, Carlisle. It represents the upper half of the Crucifixion of Our Lord. The lower half of it is given in the succeeding Plate.

The cross is formed of alternate rows of gold and silk. The crown of thorns is worked over thick string. The gold passing is made over a light, cool, brown silk. The whole is very carefully executed.



PLATE No. 2.

THIS represents the lower half of the subject given in the preceding Plate, and is of the full size of the original. The upper part, shown in Plate No. 1, is very slightly reduced, in order to introduce the figures and the canopy above the cross.

The steps to the cross are of grey silk. Below them there are two figures under canopies, which correspond with the canopy above the head of The Father and the Holy Dove, who surmount the cross.

FROM

CORBY CASTLE.

PLATE

Nº 2.



PLATE No. 3.

THIS specimen is taken from a black herse cloth, six feet long by five feet wide, belonging to S. Gregory's Church, Norwich.

There are five fishes and five angels represented upon it. The Angel carries from earth the soul of one of the faithful departed. The whole is fringed with red, green, and yellow.

FROM
S. GREGORY'S CHVRCH
NORWICH.

PLATE
Nº 3.

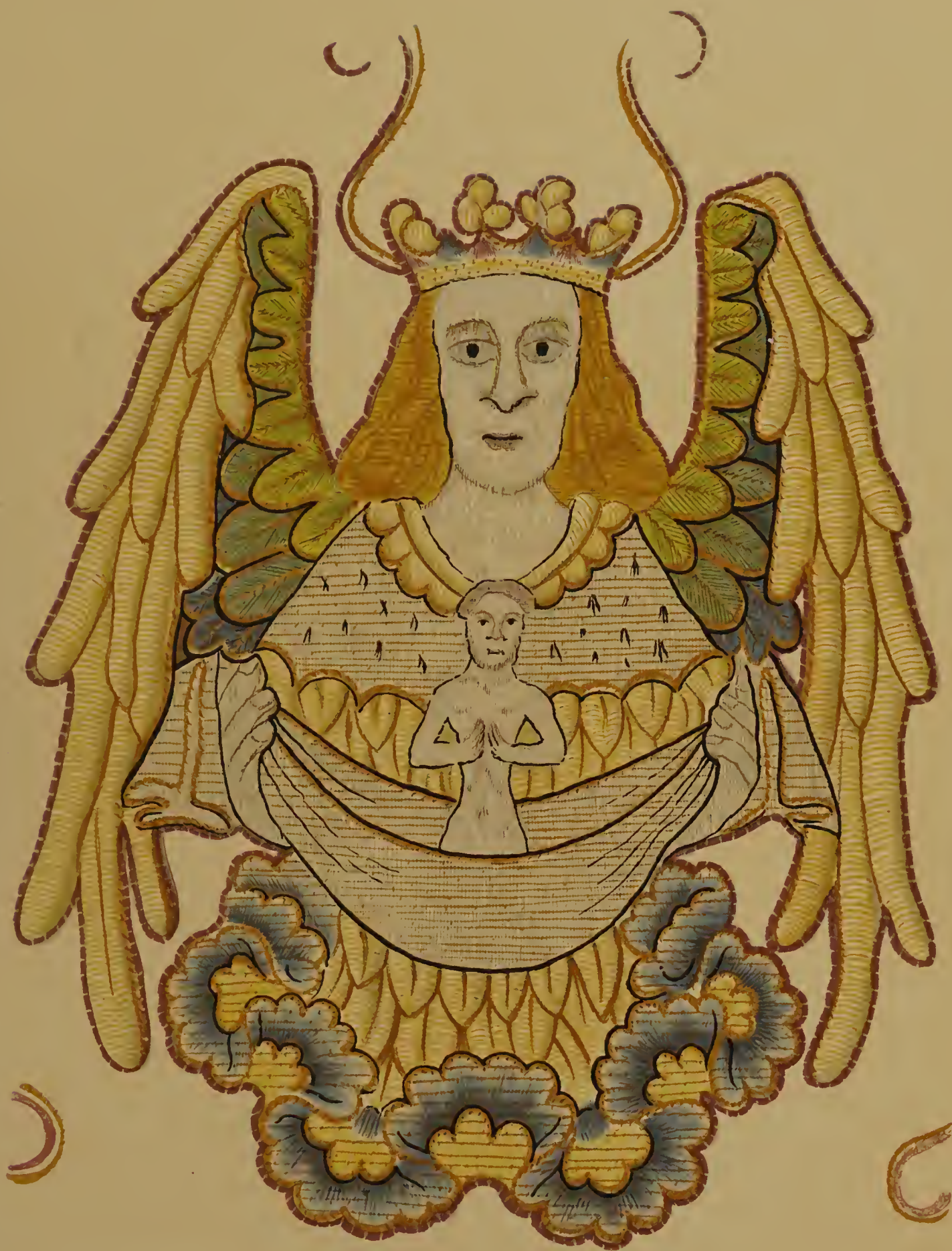


PLATE No. 4.

THIS flower is taken from an old cope at Stoulton in Worcestershire, which has been altered, and is now used as a frontal. It is on a ground of light brown velvet.

The leaves and tubes of the flowers are of two shades of green: the scales, golden olives, and the openings of the tubes and quatrefoil, are of two shades of grey. The scrolls and some of the edgings are of yellow cord, with one thread of gold. Brown and gold cord, and dark and white floss, are used, as in most other flowers. The shadows are worked with the old golden-coloured silk.

FROM

STOVLTON

WORCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE

Nº 4.



PLATE No. 5.

THIS specimen, from Buckland Church, in Gloucestershire, represents Our Lord upon the cross, and is on a ground of blue velvet. The entire piece is very interesting.

It is powdered with flowers, sprays, and scrolls, in addition to the figures of SS. Mary and John. The border now connected with it appears to have belonged to another vestment. It contains saints, under canopies of leaves and small flowers, upon red velvet.

There is a device of 'W·H·Y,' and two curious representations of churches. These appear to refer to William Whychurch, who was Abbot of Hayles, near Buckland, in A.D. 1470.

FROM
BUCKLAND
CHURCH.
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE
No 5.



PLATE No. 6.

THIS represents the figure of the B. Virgin, and belongs to the piece of work described in the preceding Plate as existing at Buckland Church, in Gloucestershire. The figure stands in the accustomed place upon one side of the cross.

FROM
BYCKLAND
CHVRCH.
GLOVCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE
Nº 6.



PLATE No. 7.

THIS Plate represents the figure of S. John, and belongs to the piece of work existing in Buckland Church described in the two preceding Plates. It completes the subject of the Crucifixion.

FROM
BUCKLAND
CHURCH.
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE
No 7.



PLATE No. 8.

THIS flower is taken, like the three preceding Plates, from the work at Buckland Church, and is on a ground of blue velvet.

FROM
BUCKLAND
CHURCH.
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE
No 8.



PLATE No. 9.

THIS specimen is taken from a chasuble of red silk, now preserved in the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Apostles at Clifton. It was brought to Clifton from Prior Park, near Bath, and represents the B. Virgin and Child. ' It is a part of a cross, which is formed by a series of panels containing different subjects from the infant life of Our Lord.

FROM
THE R. C. CHVRCH
OF THE HOLY APOSTLES.

CLIFTON.

PLATE

Nº 9.



PLATE No. 10.

THIS specimen is taken from a hanging at Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire. The work is mounted on a rich, creamy, white damask silk ground, twelve feet six inches long and four feet deep. In the centre is the beautifully worked representation of the Assumption of the B. Virgin, surrounded by Angels, which is here given. The remainder of the ground is powdered with flowers. This drawing is reduced to a scale of $1\frac{1}{4}"$ to $2"$.



PLATE No. 11.

THIS flower is taken from the hanging at Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire, which has been described on the previous page. It is used as a powdering of the general surface of the ground. Other interesting specimens of old work exist at Campden.

FROM
CHIPPING-CAMPDEN
GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

PLATE
Nº 11.



PLATE No. 12.

THIS representation of one of several Cherubim is taken from a piece of work, formerly a cope, now in the Church of S. Mary, Tedburn, near Exeter. It is on a ground of blue velvet. Other old work exists at Tedburn.

FROM
TEDBURN CHURCH.
NEAR EXETER.

PLATE

Nº 12.

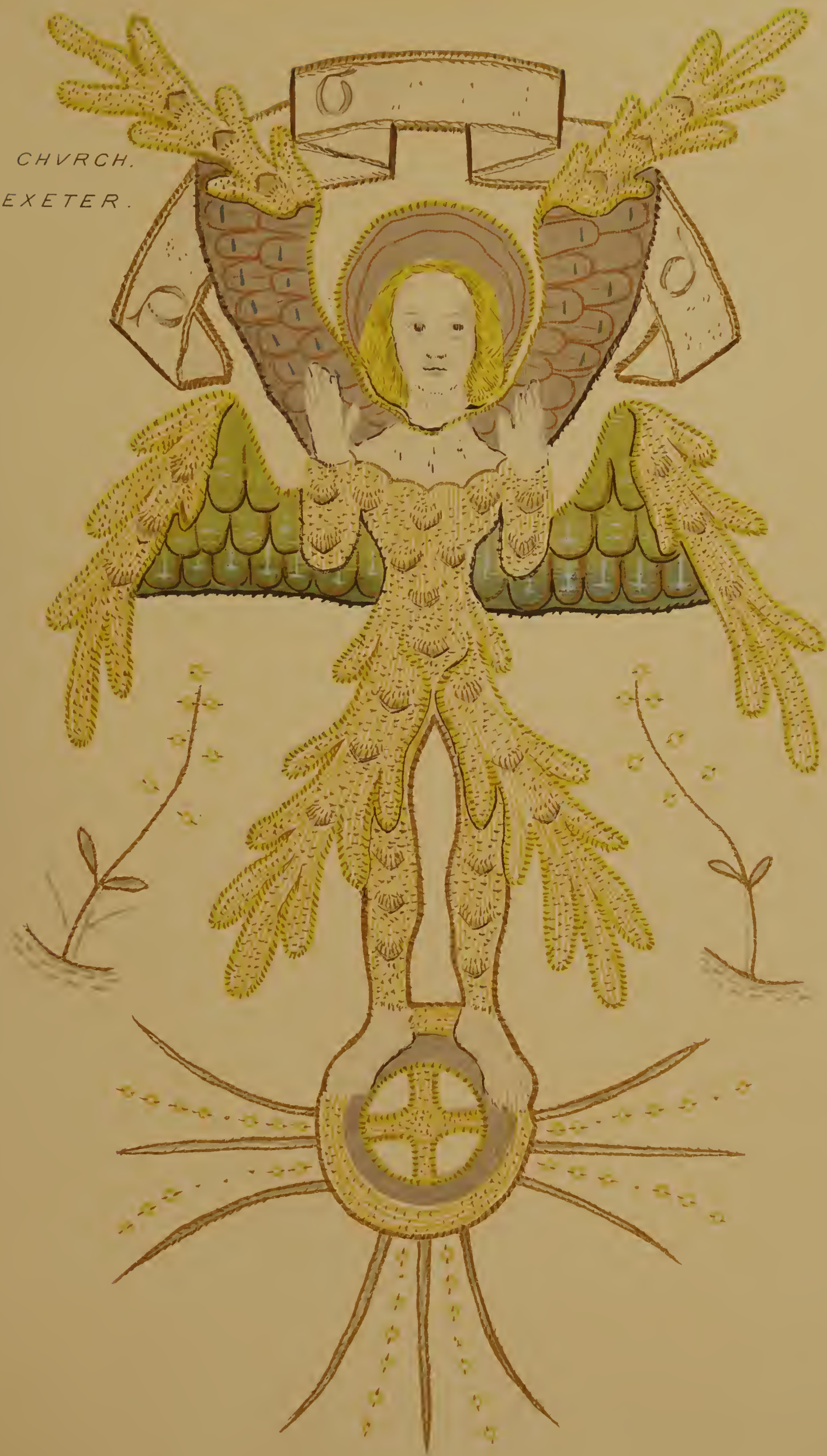


PLATE No. 13.

THIS specimen is taken from a large hanging in the Chapel of Hardwick Hall, which has apparently been made up out of various pieces of very fine old embroidery. It is now much dilapidated. It contains a number of subjects connected with the life of Our Lord, arranged under canopies.

FROM

HARDWICK HALL.

PLATE

Nº 13.



PLATE No. 14.

THIS drawing gives the centre subject of the coarsely embroidered cross of a 15th-century chasuble of green and gold velvet, from Nuremberg. It is now in the possession of Mr. Gambier Parry. There is an Angel on each side of the subject, the points of whose wings are shown in this drawing. Immediately below the centre subject is a group of figures, which has been much repaired with red velvet, so that it is now difficult to make out the subject.

In the lowest panel of the cross is represented the day of Pentecost. The group consists of the Apostles, with a central figure of the B. Virgin, and the Dove surmounting the whole.

This drawing is made to a scale of $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. to 2 in.

FROM A CHASUBLE
belonging to
MR GAMBIEP-PARRY.

PLATE
Nº 14.



20 1/2

PLATE No. 15.

THIS flower is taken from a plum-coloured chasuble of stamped velvet, in the possession of Mr. Bowden, late of Southgate House, Chesterfield. It is a good specimen of the graceful use of sprays and tendrils, which give so much life and character to old work, and are too little used in modern imitations.

FROM WORK
in the possession of
MR BOWDEN.

PLATE
Nº 15.



PLATE No. 16.

THIS representation of the Crucifixion is taken from a chasuble belonging to Philip Howard, Esq., of Corby Castle, near Carlisle. The material of the ground is a maroon-coloured velvet, with a pattern woven in gold, and gold-coloured silk. It is boldly and rather coarsely worked, but the drawing being reduced to a scale of $1\frac{1}{4}$ inch to 3 inches makes it appear very fine. This is the centre of a large cross formed of figures under canopies, among which, above the Crucifixion, is a representation of the First Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Dove, surrounded by clouds, appears at the head of the cross. Angels' hands, at four points, issue from clouds, and hold chalices to the wounds. The cross is shaded to represent wood, and has one thread of gold in lines upon it. Beneath the Crucifixion is the figure of the B. Virgin, and below her is a figure of S. John, both being under canopies.

FROM

CORBY CASTLE.

PLATE

Nº 16.



PLATE No. 17.

THIS flower is taken from a blue damask cope, powdered with flowers, belonging to Carlisle Cathedral. It has upon it two patterns of flower in addition to this one. The scrolls are a fine pale buff on red cord, with one thread of gold as usual. The hood of this cope has been cut, but it seems to have had the Annunciation worked upon it. There is also another cope.

FROM

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL.

PLATE

Nº 17.



PLATE No. 18.

THIS represents an Angel from the funeral pall of the Fishmongers' Company of London. Each of the City Guilds had one or more such palls, but few of them now remain. This one is in excellent preservation.

In the centre of the side-borders is a representation of Our Lord giving the keys to S. Peter. The Arms of the Company, with Mermaids as supporters, are on either side of this. A seated figure of S. Peter, with triple crown, is represented in the borders at each end, supported by Angels, such as the example here given. They kneel on a pavement of squares of gold, stitched with green and red alternately with a fine twist, and black line to mark the corners, and black inside the squares.

The tradition of the Company is that this Pall was used at the burial of the renowned Sir William Walworth, Knt., Lord Mayor of London, A.D. 1381.

FROM

A FUNERAL PALL

BELONGING TO

THE FISHMONGERS' COMPANY.

PLATE

Nº 18.



PLATE No. 19.

THIS specimen of grapes and leaves is taken from the funeral pall of the Vintners' Company of London. It is of cloth of gold with purple velvet pile. At one end S. Martin is represented as a soldier, dividing his cloak with a beggar who has lost his right foot, the leg being supported by a kind of cradle and crutch. At the opposite end S. Martin is again represented, in his pontifical vestments, as Bishop of Tours. On the centre of each side is represented the Blessed Virgin, with the dead body of Our Lord resting in her lap. On the right and left of this are figures of Death, with grapes and leaves, and coats-of-arms, beyond them.

FROM

A FUNERAL PALL

BELONGING TO

THE VINTNERS' COMPANY.

PLATE

Nº 19.



PLATE No. 20.

THIS drawing represents in outline the funeral pall belonging to the Saddlers' Company of London. Its date is probably about the beginning of the 16th century. The head, foot, and sides, are embroidered with the arms of the Company, between which are Angels supported by clouds, bearing up the sacred monogram, 'I. H. S.', from which rays proceed. Upon the sides of the pall is embroidered the last sentence of the *Te Deum*, with an error in the spelling of one of the words. The material of the top is a rich brocade of crimson velvet and gold.

FROM

A FUNERAL PALL

belonging to

THE SADDLERS' COMPANY.

PLATE

Nº 20.

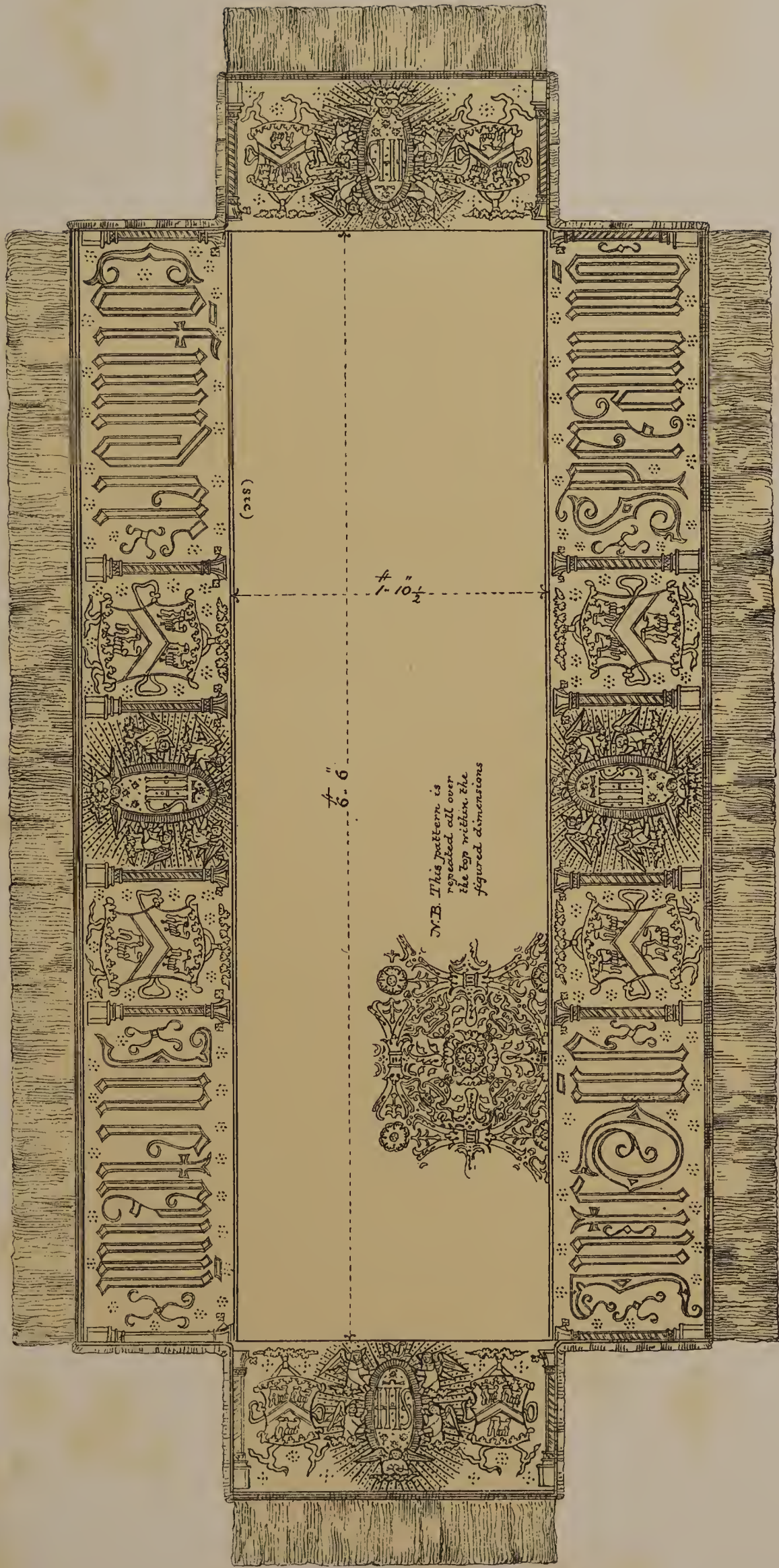


PLATE No. 21.

THIS 'plate shows the real size of the monogram 'I. H. S.' upon the sides, head, and end of the funeral pall belonging to the Saddlers' Company, which has been given entire on the preceding page. The monogram is worked in gold twist on a crimson ground, with spangles of flat silver surrounding it.

The Saddlers' Company possesses also an old banner of light green brocade, with a shield, as on the pall, a horse richly caparisoned as a crest, and two horses as supporters. The design is worked in long stitch, edged with silk cord, with the motto, 'Our trust is in God.' Both sides of this banner are alike

FROM

A FUNERAL PALL

BELONGING TO

THE SADDLERS' COMPANY.

PLATE

NO 21.



PLATE No. 22.

THE upper specimen is from a pall at Worcester. The lower specimen (an Angel issuing from clouds), is from a chasuble of crimson velvet in the South Kensington Museum. It forms part of a Crucifixion subject, and is considered to be Spanish work of the 15th century.

FROM
A PALL
AT WORCESTER.

PLATE
Nº 22.



FROM A CHASUBLE
belonging to
THE SOUTH KENSINGTON
MUSEUM.



P L A T E N o . 23.

THIS flower is taken from the pall at Worcester, which is referred
to in the last plate.

FROM

A PALL AT

WORCESTER.

PLATE

Nº 23.



PLATE No. 24.

THIS representation of the Annunciation, surrounded by powdering, is taken from a hanging now in the Church of S. Thomas à Becket at Salisbury. The ground is of lightish brown velvet. There is a bare space about $3\frac{1}{2}$ in. deep at A, A, A, A, dividing the upper from the lower part of the design. A faint straight line, just under the upper line of the work, would seem to suggest that there has been a fringe in this space.

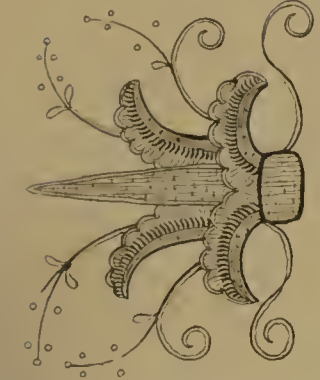
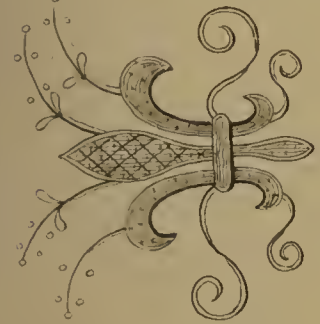
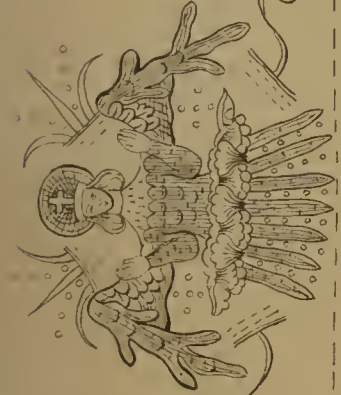
FROM

THE CHVRCH OF

S. THOMAS A' BECKET.

SALISBURY.

Centre of
Hanging



PLATE

Nº 24.

A

A

A

A



Centre of
Hanging

2 FEET

PLATE No. 25.

THIS represents the centre subject of the preceding plate, half the full size. The Dove is of silver, marked with dark and light brown lines. The dress of the B. Virgin is blue, with silver streaks.



PLATE No. 26.

THE Angel here represented is from the hanging in the Church of S. Thomas at Salisbury, the design of which is given entire in Plate No. 24.

FROM
THE CHVRCH OF
S. THOMAS A' BECKET.
SALISBURY.

PLATE
Nº 26.



PLATE No. 27.

THIS drawing represents one of the Cherubim shown upon the hanging already given entire in Plate No. 24.

FROM
THE CHVRCH OF
S. THOMAS A' BECKET.
SALISBURY.

PLATE
Nº 27



PLATE No. 28.

ALTAR FRONTAL FROM ALVELEY CHURCH,
NEAR BRIDGNORTH.

THIS piece of work appears to have been a frontal and super-frontal, formed as one whole. The space between the two dotted lines, which is marked A·A·A·A, has probably been occupied by a fringe. There are marks upon the work which indicate this. The material upon which the needlework is mounted is silk damask, in alternate breadths of red and white, as indicated by shadow in the drawing.

In the centre of the design is a standing figure, which must be intended to represent Abraham, holding in a sheet the souls of the faithful.

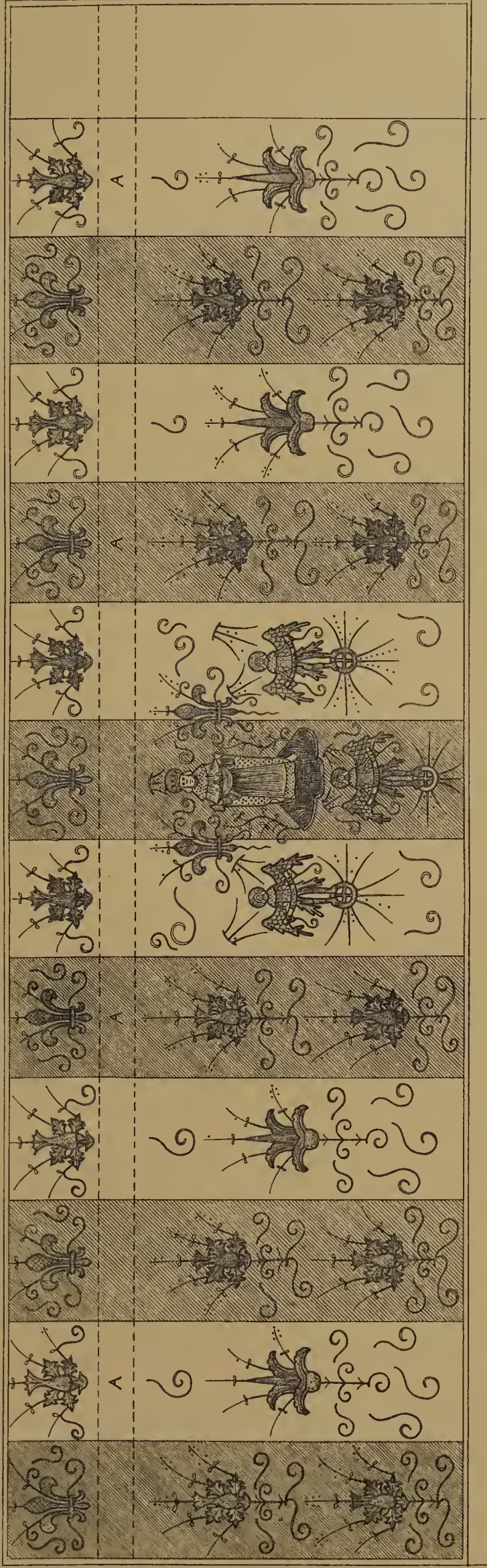
ALTAR FRONTAL

belonging to

ALVELEY CHVRCH.

PLATE

Nº 28.



This breadth is
missing



PLATE No. 29.


ALTAR FRONTAL FROM ALVELEY CHURCH.

THIS gives, full size, the standing figure of Abraham, which occupies the centre of the preceding design. It is more usual to represent Abraham under these circumstances as seated. Angels, like the one given in Plate No. 3, are often shown in connexion with his figure, carrying up single souls to the Father of the Faithful.

CENTRE FIGVRE OF
THE FRONTAL. ALVELEY
CHVRCH.

PLATE N^o 29.



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